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February 1, 2023

Assembly California Legislature



DAVID A. ALVAREZ
ASSEMBLYMEMBER, EIGHTIETH DISTRICT

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Deputy Director Paul Enriquez
Real Estate and Environmental Infrastructure Portfolio
Program Management Office Directorate
U.S. Border Patrol

RE: Tijuana River Border Wall system Project (August 2020)

Dear Deputy Director Enriquez,

I am writing in strong opposition to the Tijuana River Border Wall System Project along the Tijuana River located on the San Diego-Tijuana international border.

This project, announced on August 2020, still does not include sufficient technical review and analysis to support an assessment of its potential impact to the river hydrology, both upstream and downstream. In a report issued by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in November 2022, the Tijuana River Border Project *"has the potential to impede transboundary river flows and thus impact river hydrology, which could increase the risk of catastrophic flooding during significant storm events and the resulting impacts to surrounding communities and infrastructure"*.

During the atmospheric river rain events experienced throughout California and northern Mexico in January 2022, billions of gallons of water, including solid waste and sediment, flowed across the border through the Tijuana River. Operating a gate in a rampant river that includes large amounts of debris could have devastating impacts to the pollution control measures located in the waterway.

In a response letter to the City of Imperial Beach, dated November 5, 2020, the U.S. Customs and Border Patrol stated they would continue to coordinate with the EPA and the International Boundary and Water Commission to ensure this project does not impact existing or planned infrastructure. Based on the report issued by the EPA in November 2022, this coordination has yet to fully materialize.

Until these hydrology impacts can be fully analyzed, which is usually included in a National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) review, constructing these new border barriers are a waste of American taxpayer dollars and not a real policy solution. If you would like to discuss further or have any questions, please feel free to contact me at (619) 498-8580 or Assembly.Alvarez@Assembly.ca.gov.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "David Alvarez".

David A. Alvarez
CA Assemblymember, 80th District

